

Submitter: Morgan Hrejsa

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3435

Chair Neron, Vice-Chair McIntire, Vice-Chair Dobson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Morgan Hrejsa, and my son is in 4th grade at Buckman Elementary (Portland Public Schools). I am writing to share my strong support of House Bill 3435, School Meals for all, which would ensure that every Oregon kid has the food they need at school, regardless of where they live in the state or how much money their parents make.

For the past few years, our elementary school has benefited from free breakfast and lunch options. Buckman Elementary is a unique asset to the Portland Public Schools- it is both a lottery school and a neighborhood school, which offers an arts-focused education, helping students express themselves in through visual arts, music, and dance. The school also has a student population that just barely misses qualifying for Title One benefits, meaning that many of the students are from low-income families.

For many Buckman students, the free breakfast and lunch program ensures that they can concentrate on their education, without hunger pains. As a volunteer in my son's classroom, I know that the school has students with behavioral challenges; for those students, having a full stomach may help them focus on the techniques they use to make positive changes. When school meals are free to all, students do not sense any financial disparity between their peers, eliminating harmful, hurtful stigmas. For my own son, knowing that he can have breakfast or lunch at school offers him peace of mind; for students whose parents do not have food at home, I imagine it offers so much more.

I hope that you will pass House Bill 3435, School Meals for all, which would be an inherent good for all students and families, as well as the education system, within the state. No child deserves the hardship of dealing with hunger and food insecurity.

Thank you,

Morgan